

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 - 9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (currently amended): A method for obtaining a slab of agglomerate stone with an original antique-look surface having irregularities and cracks, comprising:

crushing a plurality of stone materials as to form an agglomerate;

mixing the crushed materials while simultaneously adding at least one binding resin as to obtain a homogeneous agglomerate mix;

pouring the homogenous agglomerate mix onto a shaped die until the shaped die is full as to form a panel of homogenous agglomerate mix, the shaped die having in the base a first layer of polyethylene-coated paper;

covering the shaped die with a second layer of polyethylene-coated paper;

vibration and vacuum pressing the panel of homogeneous agglomerate mix in the shaped die to obtain an original antique-look surface having irregularities and cracks;

hardening ~~and reinforcing~~ the irregularities and cracks of the panel at a predetermined temperature;

separating the second layer of polyethylene-coated paper from the panel after hardening the panel at said predetermined temperature by lifting and removing the second layer of polyethylene-coated paper substantially in a single piece, leaving the surface of the panel previously covered by said second layer with an original antique-look surface having irregularities and cracks; and

polishing the panel after separation of said second layer of paper to obtain an impermeable surface layer on the original antique-look surface of the panel ~~while retaining the irregularities and cracks of the original antique-look surface.~~

Claim 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method according to claim 10, wherein the panel is polished using titanium grinding wheels designed not to alter the configuration of the antique-look surface of the panel.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The method according to claim 10, wherein the polyethylene-coated paper is impregnated with sprayed polyethylene.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): An agglomerate stone slab having evenly distributed ridges and depressions which provide an antique look, the agglomerate stone slab having an impermeable surface layer, the agglomerate stone slab having smooth, regular and squared edges, the agglomerate stone slab made by a method according to claim 1.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method according to claim 12, wherein the polyethylene-coated paper is impregnated with sprayed polyethylene.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A method for obtaining a slab of agglomerate stone with an original antique-look surface having irregularities and cracks, the method comprising:

- crushing a plurality of stone materials as to form an agglomerate;
- mixing the crushed materials while simultaneously adding at least one binding resin as to obtain a homogeneous agglomerate mix;

- pouring the homogenous agglomerate mix onto a shaped die as to form a panel of homogenous agglomerate mix, the shaped die having in the base a first layer of polyethylene-coated paper;

- covering the shaped die with a second layer of polyethylene-coated paper;
- vibration and vacuum pressing the panel of homogeneous agglomerate mix in the shaped die between the first layer and the second layer of polyethylene-coated paper to obtain an original antique-look surface having irregularities and cracks;

- hardening and reinforcing the irregularities and cracks of the panel at a predetermined temperature;

- separating the second layer of polyethylene-coated paper after hardening the panel at said predetermined temperature from the panel by lifting and removing the second layer of polyethylene-coated paper substantially in a single piece, leaving the panel with a surface that was previously covered by said second layer with an original antique-look in view, the surface having irregularities and cracks; and

polishing after separation of said second layer of paper the panel to render the panel less porous, thereby reducing corrosion and dirt penetration ~~but retaining the irregularities and cracks of the surface.~~

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method according to claim 16, wherein the cracks are micro-cracks.

Claim 18-19 (cancelled)

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method according to claim 10, wherein the surface with an antique-look includes micro-cracks.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A method for obtaining a slab of agglomerate stone with an original antique-look surface having irregularities and cracks, the method consisting essentially of the steps of:

- crushing a plurality of stone materials as to form an agglomerate;
- mixing the crushed materials while simultaneously adding at least one binding resin as to obtain a homogeneous agglomerate mix;
- providing a shaped die, the shaped die having in the base a first layer of polyethylene-coated paper;
- pouring the homogenous agglomerate mix into the shaped die;
- covering the shaped die with a second layer of polyethylene-coated paper;
- vibration and vacuum pressing the homogeneous agglomerate mix in the shaped die to obtain a panel of homogenous agglomerate mix having an original antique-look surface having irregularities and cracks;
- hardening ~~and reinforcing the~~ irregularities and cracks of the panel at a predetermined temperature;
- separating the second layer of polyethylene-coated paper after hardening the panel at said predetermined temperature from the panel by lifting and removing the second layer of polyethylene-coated paper substantially in a single piece leaving the surface of the panel that was

previously covered by said second layer with an original antique-look surface having irregularities and cracks; and

polishing the panel after separation of said second layer of paper to obtain an impermeable surface layer on the original antique-look surface of the panel ~~while retaining the irregularities and cracks of the original antique-look surface.~~

Claim 22 (cancel): The method according to claim 21, wherein the homogeneous agglomerate mix is vibration and vacuum pressed without further artificially creating irregularities and cracks on the antique-look surface.